

PRIMITIVE MAN'S SURVIVAL GUIDE TO HUNTING & CATCHING WILD GAME



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Table of contents

Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping for Survival	4
Hunting.....	4
Small Game Hunting Methods	5
Birds and Waterfowl	6
Big Game	7
Big Game Hunting Methods	8
Fishing	9
Fishing Tools.....	9
Fishing Methods.....	10
Trapping	10
Trapping Gear	11
Trapping Methods	11

Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping for Survival

Harvesting game from the land is a key component of any solid survival plan. Whether you are a recreational sportsman already or hesitate at the thought of killing an animal for sport, it is essential to understand that these activities provide a sustainable food source indefinitely. Especially in the wake of a terrorist attack, economic collapse, or devastating natural disaster, a sustainable food source makes you self-sufficient. Grocery stores may no longer be able to stock their shelves. Your money may have no value. Providing food for you and your family is a priority regardless of the circumstances that may follow catastrophe.

Hunting, fishing, and trapping are all skills that require practice to hone into a valuable survival asset. After reading this guide and understanding the basics of harvesting your own food you will be well-equipped to begin incorporating these techniques into your long term survival plan.

Hunting

Hunting is a skill that can be practiced just about anywhere in the world. There are few (if any) places habitable by people where animals do not coexist. This means that hunting provides a food source regardless of where you may find yourself living in a post-disaster world. Fishing requires that a body of water be in the vicinity and trapping can require specific environments to be effective. Hunting does not have these constraints.

There are two types of game and they are typically separated by size. Big game includes animals such as deer, elk, bears, antelope and moose. Squirrels, rabbits, raccoons, and opossums are all considered small game animals. Bird species are often considered small game as well. Both types of game require different hunting methods and choice of firearm to achieve maximum effectiveness.

Small Game

Small game is usually found in larger concentrations than their big game counterparts and are easier to harvest as a result. Although skill is still required to hunt small game successfully, it is arguably less difficult than hunting deer or other large species. One of the most important decisions for small game hunting is the type of firearm you will use. There are two popular choices for small game although just about any firearm will suffice in a pinch.

The .22 caliber rifle is an excellent choice for small game. It is lightweight, accurate, and ammunition is inexpensive. Fitted with a scope, a .22 is accurate for long distances. The small caliber is necessary because anything larger would damage the meat of the animal. A cleanly placed headshot to a rabbit or squirrel with a .22 leaves all the meat undamaged and completely edible.

These rifles are available in single shot bolt action or semi-automatic versions with 10 round magazine capacities. Either option will suit you well for small game hunting. The single shot rifles tend to be slightly more accurate but this is not as important when hunting as it is in a shooting competition. In fact, the semi-automatic version is preferable when hunting as a means of survival because it allows you to shoot multiple times in rapid succession which greatly increases your chances of hunting success.

Another popular choice among small game hunters is the shotgun. A shotgun can be loaded with different shells depending on the game being targeted. It can be used for any game from deer to squirrel and makes an excellent choice for self-defense as well. When using a shotgun for small game, a mid-range (#6 or #7) shell is preferable because it offers reasonable shooting distance with small enough pellets that small game meat is not damaged. Shotguns spray pellets in a uniform pattern giving hunters a better chance of hitting their target. This can be very helpful especially when hunting fast animals such as rabbits.

Small Game Hunting Methods

There are many ways to successfully hunt small game. Many hunters rely on dogs to help track small game. Although this is a viable option for many, it requires a dog specially trained for hunting and is not usually practical when hunting for survival. The most common, and the easiest, hunting technique is to walk through an area where you think animals are. This method is known as stalking and is especially successful on small game who tend to spook less easily than large game.

Armed with your rifle or shotgun, walk through the woods or fields slowly while constantly scanning the area for movement. Movement is usually what gives an animal away as its fur is designed to help it blend in with the natural colors of the environment. Squirrels are especially easy to hunt because they tend to seek cover in the trees. Fortunately this does not present a problem for you. Shooting a squirrel from a tree is easier than trying to lead it while it runs across the ground.

Rabbits are very quick and extremely skittish. You may not see a rabbit until it has already been spooked and is on the move. This is why hunting rabbit with a shotgun can lead to more successful hunts. The wide dispersion pattern of shotgun pellets makes it easy to shoot a moving target. The only drawback to using a shotgun is that you will spend some extra time picking the pellets out of the meat unlike a rifle shot which only has one projectile to remove.

Squirrels and rabbits are the easiest small game animals to hunt. There are many other species and their availability will depend on the region you are hunting. Some species include fox, coyote, badger, wolverine, beaver, and raccoon. Many of these species are nocturnal and hunting at night is more difficult and more dangerous. A better technique for harvesting these animals is to use some of the trapping techniques described later in this report.

Birds and Waterfowl

In many areas birds are more abundant than any other species. When you take into account the spring and fall migrations of millions of birds, there is a lot of opportunity available when hunting various bird species. Like any other type of game, bird species will vary based on location but there are some species that thrive in most environments and you would be hardpressed to find an area where they do not exist. Although any firearm will work, a shotgun is by far the most effective weapon for bird hunting. Whether on the ground or in the air, a shotgun gives the hunter an advantage that no other firearm can when bird hunting.

Wild turkey is an example of a bird that thrives in many different environments. Variations of this species are found throughout the country and are often easy to locate due to their distinct and loud calls. Not to mention that turkey is probably one of the tastiest game birds available. Turkeys have excellent sight and hearing. As a result, it is nearly impossible to sneak up on a group of turkeys without spooking them. The best method for harvesting these birds is to sit in thick cover a couple hundred yards away and call to the birds with commercially available calls. These calls are inexpensive and should last a lifetime if cared for properly. The idea is to mimic the sounds of a female turkey in hopes of drawing a curious male within shooting range. Sometimes even female turkeys will respond to the call because they feel threatened by the thought of another female in the area.

Once the turkey has been called into shotgun range (40 to 50 yards), aim for the neck. Shooting the body can also be effective but it ruins meat unnecessarily and the bird may take much longer to perish from its injuries. Wild turkeys can be large and produce upwards of 30 pounds of meat in some cases which is enough to provide many delicious meals.

Duck hunting can also produce some quality table fare. Ducks are attracted to standing bodies of water such as ponds or lakes. If you are fortunate enough to have one of these near your residence, migratory ducks are abundant during certain times of the year as they travel between northern and southern regions. The challenge of duck hunting is that often the dead bird is in the water requiring a boat to retrieve. A simple raft is sufficient and some hunters use dogs to swim out and retrieve the catch for them.

Ducks have exceptional eyesight and are wary of any changes in the terrain below. You will have to camouflage your hunting location using natural cover or the ducks could simply fly over the lake and onto the next one effectively taking away your chances of harvesting a duck.

There are a variety of other small bird species that are excellent for hunting. Many of them take residence in forests or open areas and the best method for hunting them is usually to walk slowly with the intent of spooking them into flight where they can be shot.

Big Game

Big game tends to be more challenging than small game hunting but the reward of potentially hundreds of pounds of meat makes it worth the extra effort. Usually these animals are much more cautious and will run at the first sight or smell of danger. It is not uncommon to spend an entire day hunting large game without seeing a single animal. This doesn't mean the animals aren't around but they hear you or smell you before you see them and they disappear. More than with any other game animal, large game hunting requires practice and skill that can only be obtained through practice.

Choice of weapon is very important. Ideally you want a firearm that is versatile and able to handle a variety of big game species. Animals such as whitetail deer do not require a massive rifle but larger animals like moose and elk do. Since you are hunting for survival, it is unlikely that you have access to multiple rifles and should choose one that is capable of taking down many different animals effectively.

The 30.06 rifle is the perfect combination of portability, accuracy, and killing power. The bullets are sizeable enough to take down just about any species of large game but not so powerful as to destroy the meat of smaller deer species. A 30.06 rifle equipped with a decent quality scope is one of the most popular and efficient hunting combinations available.

Large caliber rifle ammunition is much more expensive than the .22 caliber rounds mentioned previously. It is a good idea to stock up on ammunition before it becomes unavailable or the prices skyrocket due to lack of supply. An even more sustainable solution is to reload your ammunition at home. Purchasing bullets by themselves is very inexpensive and the casings can be reused many times. The supplies and tools required for handloading ammunition are readily available and it is not a difficult skill to master. As your skills progress, you can even begin making custom loads that are specific to the game you are hunting and the environment.

A shotgun is also a viable big game weapon. Slug rounds are available that have enough stopping power to take down most species. The versatility of the shotgun makes it an excellent choice. The only drawback to using a shotgun for large game is the limited effective range of the weapon and less than perfect accuracy of the slug rounds. Even though recent technology such as rifled shotgun barrels have made them much more accurate, you simply cannot get the range of a rifle in a shotgun. Many big game species will have to be hunted and shot from hundreds of yards away; something that is not possible with a shotgun.

Another method that is not as practical for small game is the bow and arrow. There are many different types of bows but the best one for those new to archery is the compound bow. Using a system of pulleys, a compound bow produces maximum arrow velocity with minimum effort. They also tend to be more accurate in the hands of a novice than a longbow or other

design might be. Archery hunting is truly the most sustainable of all hunting methods because arrows can often be reused time and again. An added benefit to bow hunting is that the kill is silent. There is no loud gunshot that has the potential to give away your location if others are in the area. This can bring unwanted attention to you and your location.

Big Game Hunting Methods

Big game hunting requires more stealth than other forms of hunting. The animals tend to be smarter or at least more wary of changes in the environment. The cracking of a stick could be enough to send an entire herd of elk running whether the sound represents a legitimate predator or not. The philosophy of big game animals tends to be run and ask questions later. As a result, stealth and patience are required to be a successful big game hunter.

Stalking techniques can work for big game hunting as long as you consider a couple of factors. First, rushing will not help your chances. The key is to move slowly through the area looking for movement. Often stalking is also called still hunting because a popular technique involves taking a couple of steps and then stopping to look and listen before taking a couple more steps. By repeating this process and moving through a hunting area slowly you are likely to see more animals and ultimately get more opportunities to harvest one. Your scent is another consideration. Animals are extremely sensitive to the scent of humans and they will not stick around once they catch wind of you.

Still hunting can be done using a bow but it takes skill not possessed by most hunters. It is definitely a technique more suited to firearm hunting where a shot can be taken from a much longer distance. Archery hunters and gun hunters alike can benefit from tree stand hunting. A tree stand lets you sit above the ground. This affords you better vision of the surrounding area and reduces the chance of your scent drifting into the nose of an animal. The trick to successful stand hunting is selecting the proper location. The stand must be set up in an area where animals tend to travel. This might be evident because of game trails carved through the foliage, animal droppings in the area, or rubs where mature male deer rub their antlers on trees to mark their territory. If you see any of these signs in an area the chances are good that it would be a good location for a stand.

Most large game species are predominantly nocturnal. You have the best chance of hunting these animals in the early morning hours or in the evening just before sunset as the animals move between bedding and feeding areas. In most places it is illegal to hunt large game at night. In a survival situation, you may be forced to hunt at night if you aren't having success in the daylight hours.

Overall hunting is a rewarding way to provide food for your family. Just remember that hunting can require a huge energy expenditure and success is not guaranteed. As your skills

progress you will likely experience more consistent success but even the best hunters come home empty handed sometimes. That is why adding either fishing or trapping to your repertoire will increase your chances of consistent success.

Fishing

Fishing is a tool that every survival plan should have because there are few places without natural bodies of water. Many experts even go so far as to say that fishing may be the most important food procurement technique available in a survival situation. There are hundreds of methods to fish many of which have been invented simply out of necessity. There are some fishermen who literally swim underwater and grab fish with their hands in a technique called noodling. Hooks, nets, and spears are also popular methods of catching fish.

If you were fortunate enough to select a bug out location ahead of time, hopefully you chose one with a natural water source. Not only can this provide valuable water for cooking and drinking, but there is a high probability that there are fish living in the water that can provide an endless amount of nutrition.

If there is no water right near your property, there is still a good chance that water is somewhere nearby. Unless you live in the desert, bodies of water are necessary to provide for wildlife and plants in the area. Even if you have to walk a couple miles to locate a water supply, the rewards of fishing there make the trip worth it.

Another advantage of fishing is that it does not require nearly the energy expenditure typically required when hunting. After arriving at the fishing location, it doesn't take much to throw a hook into the water and wait. Even if you are not successful, the positive side is that you have not used many valuable calories during your failed attempt. Some methods of fishing, such as the use of nets, take this a step further and provide a level of autonomy. You can set the net and accomplish other tasks while the net does the work for you. In a survival situation this is ideal because there are usually many other things requiring your attention at the same time.

Fishing Tools

The tools available for fishing vary as much as the species of fish available for harvest. A survival kit should include a couple of fish hooks and line if possible as this will make fabricating a fishing pole out of a stick easy. You might also consider including a collapsible fishing pole that can easily be stored in your survival kit. Unfortunately, these items are not always available when you need them but unlike hunting which requires specialized tools, fishing gear can be made out of almost anything.

One technique that has been used successfully in survival situations is making a hook from the top of an aluminum soda can. The little piece that you lift to open the can makes for a

very good fish hook after a small piece is cut off using a knife. Fish hooks have even been carved out of twigs when nothing else is available.

Bait can be anything from insects found in the area to leftover scraps of table food placed on the hook. Especially in areas where fish are not accustomed to fishermen, most fish will bite on anything just to see what it is. They do learn quickly and you are unlikely to hook a monster a second time if he gets away from you the first time.

The point is that fishing is the most versatile of all sustainable food gathering methods and the tools are not nearly as important as having a little understanding of the techniques available. With this knowledge it is possible to create fishing opportunities no matter where you find yourself.

Fishing Methods

Using a rod and reel to fish is the image that usually comes to mind when people think of fishing. It is a very effective method of fishing because it allows you to direct your lure to the exact area where fish may be hiding. For instance, many fish seek protection in areas where rocks or logs stick out of the water. These areas may be inaccessible by nets or other methods but a good cast of the rod can put your hook right where the fish are. The drawback to rod and reel fishing is that you can only catch one fish at a time. Providing enough food for an entire family could take an entire day.

Gill nets are large nets designed to be spread across an area of water where fish are likely to pass. These work especially well in moving water such as streams or rivers. As fish swim into the net, they become stuck until you retrieve the net. The advantages to using a gill net are that it can catch many more fish simultaneously and does not need constant supervision. Both of these are important in survival scenarios.

Spearing fish can also be effective. A spear can be made out of a tree branch with the end sharpened using a knife. You will have the most success using this method if you wade out into the water and remain perfectly still. Many times the fish will swim near you and a quick jab of the spear is all that is required to harvest the fish. Remember that water refracts light so you will have to aim slightly lower than you anticipate for this method to be successful. A couple hours worth of practice should have you spearing fish like a pro.

Trapping

The seemingly lost art of trapping can be a life-saving asset for survival. Trapping refers to using various traps to capture animals. After setting the traps, you can leave and perform other tasks giving it the advantage of autonomy similar to fishing. Successful trapping requires practice and knowledge of animal behavior to ensure traps are set in the proper location.

Although trapping big game is possible, it is usually much more difficult to set these large traps and success rates are generally lower than small game trapping. Any small game animal that can be hunted can also be trapped. In fact, many nocturnal species are better harvested using traps because it is almost impossible to spot them in the dark when they are actively feeding.

Trapping Gear

Commercially made traps are readily available and inexpensive. They range from simple snare traps to more complex live capture traps and all designs come in a variety of sizes to suit the game you are targeting. Survival fishing does not necessarily require targeting a species to be effective. Even small game hunting does not require much planning. Trapping requires knowing exactly what animal you are targeting because the size of the trap, the location, and the bait used will differ for each animal.

The simplest trap is the snare. A snare trap is a wire noose with one end anchored to a tree, rock, or other immovable object. Once an animal moves through the snare it begins to tighten its grip and holds the animal until you arrive to harvest it properly. A snare can be made from copper appliance wire if you do not have any commercially manufactured ones and these homemade traps are just as effective.

Another easily constructed trap is the deadfall. By propping a heavy log or rock up on sticks with some bait underneath, animals will venture under the heavy object, knock the support stick down, and be crushed as a result. Deadfalls have been used for thousands of years and can be constructed from materials found in the forest.

Live capture traps can also be made but it is recommended that novice trappers purchase commercially available ones if they plan on using live trapping techniques. You may consider the use of live traps if you live in a very warm climate where a dead animal will spoil quickly or if you will be unable to check the traps on a daily basis.

Trapping Methods

Trapping methods are essentially the same regardless of the type of trap you use. Trapping relies heavily on proper trap placement and this is a skill that is learned by practicing and studying the behavior patterns of animals. For instance, if you are trying to trap beavers you will have to place snares in the water near where they enter and exit the beaver dam. A poplar branch works as a good bait for beavers. When trapping rabbits, a snare placed directly in front of a rabbit den is most effective. Although bait is not required in this case, any type of vegetable is usually appealing to rabbits.

Trapping squirrels requires a slightly different tactic. The most effective method is to construct a squirrel pole. This is simply a fallen tree that is preferably leaning up from the ground at a 45 degree angle with multiple snares attached to its length. Squirrels will often use these fallen trees to get up to higher branches on adjacent trees and they will become tangled in the snares. A squirrel pole can harvest multiple animals in one day if placed in a high traffic area.

Trapping truly is a tool that is learned by trial and error. What may work for a certain species in one region may be completely ineffective on the same species in another area. Try to learn what the animals in your area are eating and use the same food for bait when possible. If a bait seems too unnatural many animals will stay clear of the area and your trapping efforts will be a failure.

Whether you adopt one, two, or all of these sustainable food options, realizing now that your stored food supplies (if you have any) are not unlimited should motivate you to start honing your skills now. This ensures that you will be able to live off the land when required and it is another important aspect to a successful survival plan.